

Summer 2016 MLAS Course Roster

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MLAS 6100

American Southern Jews in Life and Literature

Instructor: Adam Meyer

Days and Time: Mondays from 6:00 to 9:00pm

Dates: June 6th to August 8th

Location: Buttrick Hall

Course Description: Historical accounts and analyses of Jewish life in America almost always focus on the experiences of Jews in large Northern cities, most notably New York, despite the fact that Jews have also been present in the South throughout American history. This course seeks to rectify that imbalance by examining Jewish life in the South from both a historical and a literary perspective. Looking at the ways in which Southern Jews have interacted with their non-Jewish neighbors, as well as with Jews from other parts of the country, during such important events as the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement, among many others, helps to provide a more complete view of the Jewish as well as the Southern experience in America. Examining works of fiction about Southern Jews similarly helps to enhance our understanding of the fullness and complexity of Jewish American and Southern literatures. Because the city of Nashville has played such a pivotal role in so many aspects of Southern history, there will be a particular focus on examining the story of Nashville's Jewish population.

About this instructor: Adam Meyer is an Associate Professor in, and Associate Director of, the Program in Jewish Studies. He holds degrees from Kenyon College and the University of New Mexico, and earned his PhD at Vanderbilt. He taught in the English Department at Fisk University for 16 years, including several as Chair, before returning to Vanderbilt and taking up his current position. His primary academic and publishing interests are in Black-Jewish Relations in American literature, including Southern literature, and he teaches undergraduate

courses in these areas. His interest in Southern Jewish life has led to his recently being named to the editorial board of the journal Southern Jewish History.

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MLAS 6100

Ethics

Instructor: Robert Talisse

Days and Time: Tuesdays from 6:00 to 9:00 pm

Dates: June 7th to August 9th

Location: Furman Hall

Course Description: What if you could prevent a murder by telling a lie? What if you could save a life by stealing a car? What if you could save five lives by committing one murder? What if you knew you could get away with that murder by telling a well-constructed lie? Would it be wrong to commit the murder? What kind of person would you be were you to murder one to save five others? Would it matter if the five you save were close friends, and the one murdered were a cranky stranger?

Attempts to give coherent and systematic answers to moral questions like the ones above have resulted in rival theories of morality. In this course, we will critically examine the most influential moral theories. Through careful study of key primary texts supplemented with contemporary articles, students will explore the landscape of philosophical theorizing about morality, develop critical thinking and dialectical skills, and evaluate their own moral intuitions.

Required Text: Ethics: History, Theory, and Contemporary Issues. 6th edition. Cahn and Markie, eds. Oxford University Press.

Requirements: Each week, each student will write a one-page reaction to the week's reading assignment. In addition, students will write two short philosophical papers.

About this Instructor: Robert Talisse is W. Alton Jones Professor of Philosophy and Chair of the Philosophy Department at Vanderbilt. His primary areas of research are political philosophy, ethics, and democratic theory. Accordingly, his main publications and teaching duties lie in those areas.

Email: robert.talisse@Vanderbilt.Edu Phone: 615-343-8671

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MLAS 6100

Michelangelo Buonarroti: Life and Works

Instructor: Sheri Shaneyfelt

Days and Time: Wednesdays 6:00 to 9:00pm

Dates: June 8th to August 10th

Location: Cohen Hall

Course Description: This course will focus on Michelangelo Buonarroti, 1475-1564. We will consider his sculpture, painting, architecture, and drawings, and to a somewhat lesser degree, his written works, including his poetry and letters. Our study of Michelangelo will be grounded in the cultural, historical, and religious climate of his day. Furthermore, we will consider the artistic ambience in Florence at the time of his training, and his profound influence not only upon artists of his generation, but those following. Thus, some consideration will also be given to other artists working in Florence and Rome, including Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael Santi, to provide an understanding of High Renaissance Art in Central Italy as a whole.

About this instructor:

Sheri Shaneyfelt (Centre College, B.S.; Vanderbilt University, M.A.; Indiana University at Bloomington, Ph.D.) is Principal Senior Lecturer in the History of Art and specializes in the Italian Renaissance. She also teaches courses in Northern European Renaissance and in Western European Baroque Art at Vanderbilt and is a recipient of the Harriet S. Gilliam teaching award for the College of Arts and Science. Her research has been published in *The Art Bulletin*, *The Burlington Magazine*, *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, and in *Studying and Conserving Paintings*, a joint publication of the Kress Foundation and the Institute for Fine Arts Conservation Center at NYU. Dr. Shaneyfelt's current studies and publication emphasis will continue her focus on Renaissance Umbria, particularly the Società del 1496, the school of Pietro Perugino, and painting and workshop practices in the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, including Perugino and the early Raphael.